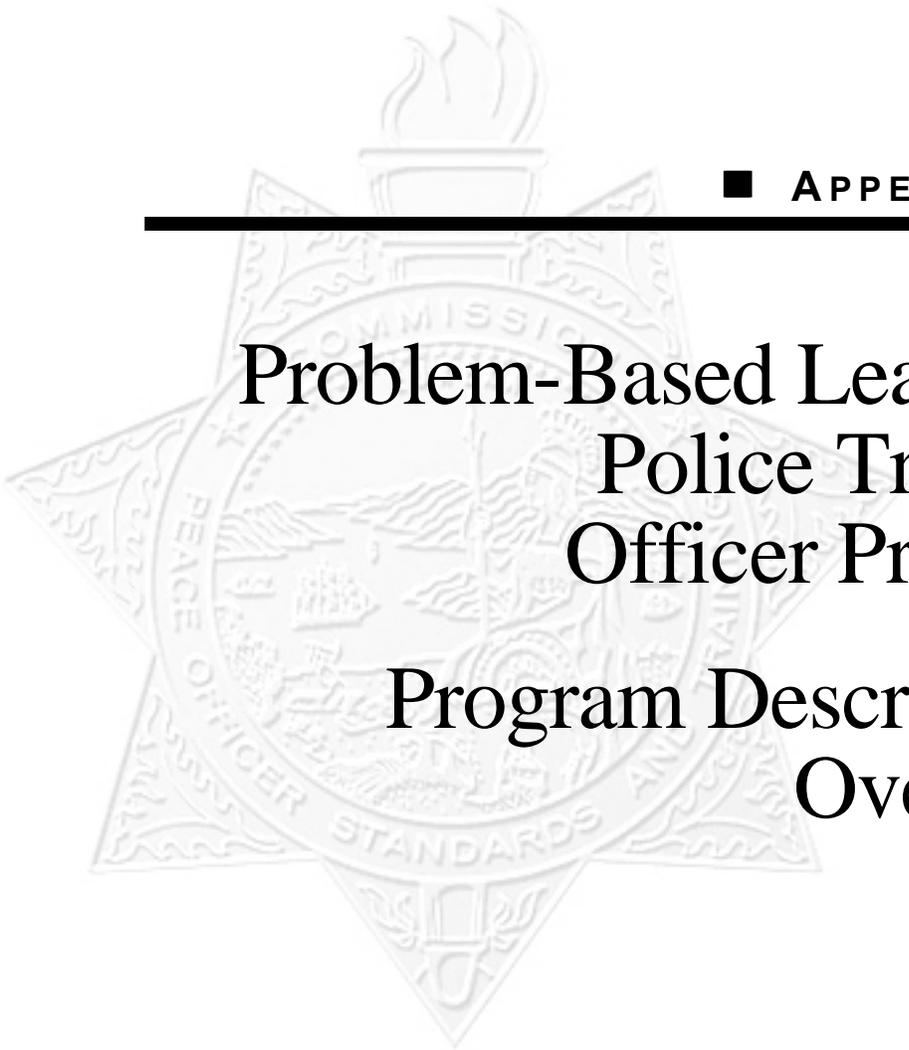


■ APPENDIX XIV

---



**COPS**  
**Problem-Based Learning/  
Police Training  
Officer Program**  
**Program Description/  
Overview**

# COPS PBL/PTO TRAINING MODEL

THE POLICE TRAINING OFFICER PROGRAM for POST-ACADEMY TRAINING

## PTO Program Objectives

- To provide learning opportunities for new officers that meet or exceed the needs of both the community and the policing agency
- To develop and enhance the trainee's learning from the academy within the community environment through a series of "real-life" problem-solving activities
- To foster a growing independence from the police training officer over the course of the program to a stage where the trainee is able to work effectively while alone on patrol
- To produce graduates of the training program who are capable of providing customer-centered, responsible, community-focused police services
- To teach transferable learning skills using a problem-based learning model that trainees can apply to problems throughout their careers
- To provide consistent, fair evaluations that address not only a trainee's skills, knowledge acquisition, and application, but also evaluates their ability to problem-solve effectively

## The Program

More than 400 law enforcement agencies answered surveys to identify the most important activities for a police officer working in a department where COPPS is practiced. The most commonly cited police activities included the investigation of domestic violence and other crimes, patrol procedures, responding to critical incidents, and enforcing local policies and laws. These topic areas are encapsulated into four Substantive Topics (Phases):

- **Non-Emergency Response**
- **Emergency Incident Response**
- **Patrol Activities**
- **Criminal Investigations**

Each phase of training lasts three weeks. Within each phase of training, officers perform activities identified as *core competencies*. Core competencies are the specific, value-based activities that police officers use while performing traditional police work. They are reinforced in every call and in every problem tackled by the trainee. They are documented in coaching and training reports and other forms of evaluation.

The core competencies are:

- **Police Vehicle Operations**
- **Conflict Resolution**
- **Use of Force**
- **Local Procedures, Policies, Laws and Organizational Philosophies**
- **Report Writing**
- **Leadership**
- **Problem-Solving Skills**
- **Community Specific Problems**
- **Cultural Diversity & Special Needs Groups**
- **Legal Authority**
- **Individual Rights**
- **Officer Safety**
- **Communication Skills**
- **Ethics**
- **Lifestyle Stressors/Self Awareness/Self Regulation**

### **The Learning Matrix**

The Substantive Topics and Core Competencies are brought together to form a learning matrix (See Illustration A). There may be some tendency to view the matrix as a chart for checking off training accomplishments, but this is not the intention of the matrix. Instead, it serves as a guideline for learners and trainers during the training period. The matrix helps determine what trainees have learned, what they need to learn, and what process the PTO will use to evaluate the trainee.

The matrix is divided into the four Substantive Topics across the top. The side of the matrix lists the Core Competencies that are required of officers in most situations. The content of each cell within the matrix will reflect each department's local procedures, policies, laws, and philosophies for dealing with policing activities. (See Appendix XV for Examples of Matrix Cells by Core Competency)

# THE LEARNING MATRIX

ILLUSTRATION A

	PHASE A Non-Emergency Incident Response	PHASE B Emergency Incident Response	PHASE C Patrol Activities	PHASE D Criminal Investigation
<b><u>Core Competencies</u></b>				
Police Vehicle Operations	A1	B1	C1	D1
Conflict Resolution	A2	B2	C2	D2
Use of Force	A3	B3	C3	D3
Local Procedures, Policies, Laws, Philosophies	A4	B4	C4	D4
Report Writing	A5	B5	C5	D5
Leadership	A6	B6	C6	D6
Problem-Solving Skills	A7	B7	C7	D7
Community Specific Problems	A8	B8	C8	D8
Cultural Diversity & Special Needs Groups	A9	B9	C9	D9
Legal Authority	A10	B10	C10	D10
Individual Rights	A11	B11	C11	D11
Officer Safety	A12	B12	C12	D12
Communication Skills	A13	B13	C13	D13
Ethics	A14	B14	C14	D14
Lifestyle Stressors/Self-Awareness/Self-Regulation	A15	B15	C15	D15
<b>Learning Activities</b>	Introduction of Learning Matrix	Use of learning matrix	Use of learning matrix	Use of learning matrix
	Journaling	Journaling	Journaling	Journaling
	Introduction of Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise	Continuation of Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise	Continuation of Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise	Final Neighborhood Portfolio Presentation
<b>Evaluation Activities</b>	Weekly Coaching and Training Reports	Weekly Coaching and Training Reports	Weekly Coaching and Training Reports	Weekly Coaching and Training Reports
	Problem -Based Learning Exercise	Problem -Based Learning Exercise	Problem -Based Learning Exercise	Problem -Based Learning Exercise

As an example in using the matrix, Cell A1 deals with vehicle operations during Non-Emergency Incident Response. If the department has two different procedures for vehicle operations, for example, defensive driving and vehicle stops, they would be labeled “A1”. Cell A1 would contain two sets of procedures and desired outcomes. At the conclusion of the labeling process, each department should have included all relevant policies and procedures into the matrix. This matrix building exercise occurs during the training course for the Police Training Officers (PTOs).

The matrix cells also include performance outcomes that police trainees need to exhibit by the completion of the PTO program. The content of the matrix will vary depending on each agency, but performance outcomes should remain the same. Appendix XVI contains a sample of the Reno (Nevada) Police Department’s matrix for its Patrol Activities Phase.

### **Applying the Learning Matrix**

Each cell of the learning matrix contains a number of required skills, police procedures, responsibilities, and performance outcomes. As previously noted, each department that uses this program must review each cell and add its own local procedures, policies, laws, etc.

During the course of training, the trainee and the PTO will maintain a journal on their activities while handling calls for service. The trainee will refer to the matrix cells when journaling and throughout the training program to ensure he/she is learning the appropriate skills and achieving the required outcomes. During the mid-term and final phase evaluations, the Police Training Evaluators (PTEs) will evaluate the trainee using the learning matrix outcomes.

The matrix serves to demonstrate interrelationships between Core Competencies and daily police activities. Recognizing how Core Competencies apply to daily activities is the foundation for teaching police officers to think more holistically.

### **Journaling**

Journaling is an essential process for reinforcing daily learning. Topics for journaling include: strengths and areas for improvement, debriefings on calls for service, and dialogue on selected PBL exercises. Trainees will use their journals to record relevant daily information on their learning process. This may include recording the various stages of the PBL process – ideas, known facts, etc. – as well as any information from their regular calls for service and patrol duties. These journals will also allow the trainee and the training officer to record instances where learning has or has not occurred during a shift. The trainee will also use his or her journal to keep track of information needed for Problem-based Learning Exercises (PBLEs), Coaching and Training Reports (CTRs), and the Neighborhood Portfolio Exercises (NPEs). Journals are not part of the evaluation process. Journals are always discoverable for court purposes and officers must remember to keep the language and the content at a professional standard.

Journaling will:

- Strengthen the learning process
- Identify areas for improvement
- Provide a written opportunity to debrief calls for service
- Facilitate creative thinking and self-evaluation
- Revisit problem-based learning processes and their application to police activities

## **Program Structure**

The PTO program is structured into the following fifteen-week duration.

- *Week 1:* **Integration Week:** Training focused on getting the trainee acclimated to policing.
- *Week 2-4:* **Phase A: Non-Emergency Response:** Training focused on the non-emergency response characteristics of police patrol efforts. Trainees will be introduced to the Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise and the first Problem-Based Learning Exercise.
- *Week 5-7:* **Phase B: Emergency Response:** Training focused on emergency response characteristics of police patrol efforts. Trainees will be introduced to the second Problem-Based Learning Exercise.
- *Week 8:* **Mid-Term Evaluation Period:** This allows program personnel to evaluate the trainee's progress and the program's effectiveness. (Independent evaluator.)
- *Week 9-11:* **Phase C: Patrol Activities:** Training focused on general patrol activities. Trainee introduced to third Problem-Based Learning Exercise.
- *Week 12-14:* **Phase D: Criminal Investigation:** Training focused on criminal investigations techniques and how they apply to the patrol officer's duties. Trainees introduced to fourth Problem-Based Learning Exercise.
- *Week 15:* **Final Evaluation.** (Independent evaluator.)

## **The Four Phases of Training - the PBLEs**

Each phase of training lasts three weeks. Even though the trainer and trainee are responsible to answer calls for service, the overall training objective for that phase is emphasized. For example, in the patrol phase, trainees may focus on COPPS activities by addressing an ongoing neighborhood problem, known in the program as the PBLE. They will return to the problem throughout the entire three-week period between calls for service. They will also use related information from calls for service in order to solve that problem. They will liaise with local residents concerned with the problem, and they will seek help from other officers who can assist in their learning.

By the end of the three-week period, the trainee will submit a solution to the problem to the training officer for review. Ideally, if possible, the trainee will actually implement a solution to the problem. Education research shows that learning is facilitated by real-life relevance and hands-on experience. The PTO model provides ample opportunities for trainees to incorporate the core competencies of policing into their daily practice.

The PBLE solutions are also written into a report by the trainee and commented on by the trainer. These reports, submitted every three weeks, add four formal evaluations in the trainee's documented record by the end of the training. Agencies should create PBLEs of their own design with local community problems.

## **The NPE – Neighborhood Portfolio Exercises**

In addition to the PBLEs, the trainee uses three additional problem-based learning methods. First, the NPE (Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise), focuses on developing a network of resources within the community the trainee is responsible for policing. The Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise runs the full 15 weeks of the learning experience.

The Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise is designed to give the trainee a sense of the community where he or she will work, and to encourage the trainee to develop community contacts that are critical when practicing the COPPS philosophy.

Examples of the components of the Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Geographical and demographic characteristics of the area of responsibility
- Identification of the various neighborhoods and cultural communities in the area of responsibility
- Crime problems
  - Historical
  - Current trends
  - Relationships to other crime trends
- Quality of life issues impacting the area of responsibility
- Problem-solving efforts
  - Historical
  - Current
  - Relationships to other problem-solving efforts
- Community Groups and Neighborhood Advisory Committees

- Resources Template
  - Law enforcement resources
  - Governmental resources
  - Community resources
  - Business and private resources
  
- Officers' observations and recommended plans of action

The NPE concludes with the trainee presenting his or her findings to the Board of Evaluators (BOE), or any other persons deemed appropriate. In some cases, the trainee may present the information to the other officers on that shift or community members. The NPE is also written up in a formal evaluation report by the trainee and commented upon by the trainer. This is another formal evaluation in the trainee's record.

## **The CTR – Coaching and Training Reports**

PTOs do not complete daily evaluation forms. Instead, the PTO and the trainee complete weekly Coaching and Training Reports (CTRs) that evaluate the trainee's performance. A CTR contains the 15 core competency areas for comments by both the trainee and the trainer. The CTR process calls for the trainee to write more and the PTO to write less than in traditional training models. Also, the trainee takes more responsibility for learning while the PTO spends more time coaching and teaching and less time evaluating.

The weekly Coaching and Training Report has five steps:

1. The trainee and the PTO note their daily activities in their individual journals.
2. At the end of each week, the trainee and the PTO select an incident from the week that pertains to the Substantive Topic area. If a significant incident did not occur during that week's calls for service, the PTO may choose to pose a hypothetical incident or choose another officer's experience from that week.
3. The trainee then writes out a brief description of the incident on the weekly Coaching and Training Report. This "narration" should be brief and outline only the key identifying elements.
4. The trainee will comment on all Core Competencies in the CTR evaluation. The material covered during that week's chosen incident highlights what was learned and what remains to be learned. The trainee should discuss his or her learning, rather than simply narrating the incident.
5. The PTO will review the trainee's comments and will add his or her own comments and provide feedback and guidance where appropriate.

At the conclusion of each phase of training, the trainer and the trainee will review the weekly coaching and training reports to determine what was done well and what areas require attention or improvement.

**EXAMPLE: Using the Matrix for Patrol Activities**

A trainee takes part in a DUI checkpoint in the course of regular patrol duties. While at the checkpoint, an impaired driver races away from the scene and starts a police chase. If the trainee or police training officer (PTO) chooses this event for inclusion into the evaluation, the trainee will review each core competency and comment on each one. Examples of how some cells apply include:

- **C1** Police Vehicle Operations
- **C4** Local Procedures and Policies
- **C5** Report writing procedures for completing Driving Under the Influence (DUI) forms, statement taking and case preparation
- **C10** Legal authority for conducting checkpoints
- **C14** Ethics

The PTO and trainee team should engage in a practice of including each core competency to the situation they select. **PLEASE NOTE: The trainee must not simply narrate what happened in each cell area but should analyze and discuss what he or she learned from the experience.**

Because police work does not typically conform to regular patterns, different activities will naturally occur at all phases of training. The PBL/PTO model has the advantage of being flexible. If an incident occurs in one phase that relates to another phase - for example, a PTO and trainee respond to a domestic violence situation involving home invasion and assault during Patrol Activities - the PTO may choose to take advantage of the learning opportunity and use the incident for a CTR that week on Criminal Investigation. The twelve CT reports represent another formal form of evaluation documented in the trainee's record.

## **The Evaluation Weeks**

The PTO program contains two independent evaluation phases. These include the mid-term and final phase evaluations. During these evaluation phases, the trainee works with a Police Training Evaluator (PTE) who evaluates the trainee by applying the 15 core competencies as benchmarks of performance. On the first day of the evaluation the trainee provides a self-assessment of each of these competencies. The evaluator uses this self-evaluation to compare the trainee's own self-assessment with actual behavior. The evaluator will normally submit a written review of the trainee's evaluation, including an assessment of the trainee's performance based on his or her own self-evaluation. These reviews also become part of the trainee's evaluation record.

If a trainee does not pass the evaluation phase he or she will be returned to a training officer for remediation, or may be required to complete a Learning Activity Package dealing with the specific issue that needs remediation.

## **Learning Activity Packages - LAPs**

A final component of the PTO program is the Learning Activity Package (LAP). If a PTO recognizes a deficiency in the trainee's performance or sees an opportunity to enhance learning, the trainer should utilize a Learning Activity Package. These learning tools will serve as remedial training or as a supplemental resource for PTOs and trainees to support a trainee's progress through the program.

Agencies should identify consistent areas of weakness shown by trainees and new officers and prepare supplementary training material to address those training needs. The material in the LAP may include legal information, a list of resources where more information is available (such as internet sites, books, and articles), videos, training primers, policies, procedures and a research activity for the trainee to learn more about the topic.

Coordinators should keep models of LAPs in a central repository available to all trainees—or other personnel—in the agency. Since they are continually updated, they represent one way to ensure that the PTO program remains current and relevant to changing demands. Sample Learning Activity Packages (LAPs) are located in Appendix XIX.

## **PTO Program Personnel**

The PTO program contains a number of roles and responsibilities for officers. These include the following:

- **Police Trainee**
- **Police Training Officer**

- **PTO Evaluator**
- **Board of Evaluators**
- **Program Coordinator**
- **Program Supervisors**

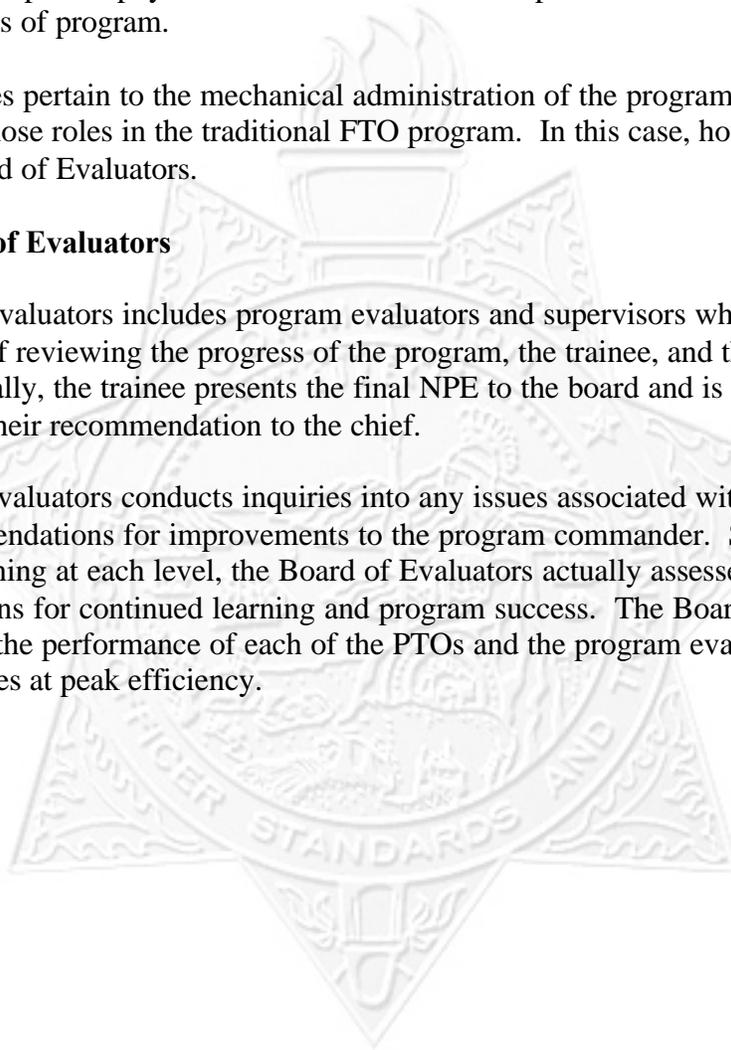
It is crucial to note that each of these personnel must be familiar with the PTO program and especially the problem-based learning philosophy at its foundation. Familiarization seminars are necessary for all personnel involved in this program for the first time. They need to be fully supportive of the philosophy and executives must take steps to ensure employees are well versed in the mechanics of program.

Since these roles pertain to the mechanical administration of the program, most of these personnel are similar to those roles in the traditional FTO program. In this case, however, the PTO program includes a Board of Evaluators.

### **BOE – Board of Evaluators**

The Board of Evaluators includes program evaluators and supervisors who share the responsibility of reviewing the progress of the program, the trainee, and the Police Training Officer. Typically, the trainee presents the final NPE to the board and is then interviewed by the board prior to their recommendation to the chief.

The Board of Evaluators conducts inquiries into any issues associated with the program and makes recommendations for improvements to the program commander. Since this program focuses on learning at each level, the Board of Evaluators actually assesses problems and provides recommendations for continued learning and program success. The Board assumes responsibility for monitoring the performance of each of the PTOs and the program evaluators to ensure that the program operates at peak efficiency.



## Glossary of Program Terms

### **Board of Evaluators (BOE)**

The BOE includes training supervisors, police training officers, and the training coordinator who oversee the training process. The duties of the **BOE** include reviewing training performance of trainees and PTOs, conducting examinations of the program, and investigating specific training concerns. The **BOE** would also review any recommendations for termination submitted by the police training officers and, according to departmental needs, conduct exit interviews with trainees.

### **Community Learning Partnerships**

Once a trainee receives the *problem-based learning exercise (PBLE)*, he or she will form “partnerships” to solve the problem. In problem-based learning, students work in “cohort groups” to resolve problems. In policing, these groups are represented by the actual community members where that trainee is working. These partners may include other police officers, including the police training officer, members of social or community services, witnesses, victims or other members of the community. This process is known as “community learning.” It is one of the means by which COPPS and the value-driven philosophy is incorporated into the PTO program.

### **Core Competencies**

These are the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by all police officers when considering all aspects of police service.

### **Failing Forward**

Some of our most profound learning occurs when we make mistakes. Contemporary police writers and leaders call this “failing forward.” By using PBL, trainees discover not only positive solutions but also *what does not work*.

### **Learning Activity Packages (LAPs)**

During the PTO training sessions, the trainers develop reference packages dealing with a variety of topics. These topics include information on drug investigations, techniques for crime prevention through environmental design, history and structure of the organization, governmental structure, legal information, etc. The police agency will add information to the LAPs as necessary. This information will provide an additional resource for trainees during the program. All LAPs will include information for searching on-line.

### **Learning Matrix**

This program uses a learning matrix, which is a chart of the 15-week PBL training model. This helps the trainer and trainee organize the trainee’s learning time. Substantive topics are listed across the top of the chart with core competencies on the side. The chart contains learning “cells” for each phase of the training. The “cells” contain policing regulations, procedures, and skills that the trainee needs to learn. Typically, the learning matrix is constructed by each police agency during the PTO training course, *which should be taught by certified police problem-based learning instructors*. The learning matrix also includes time lines for the trainee evaluations.

### **Multiple Intelligences**

Recent developments in education, led by Harvard University Professor Howard Gardiner, indicate that individuals learn at different rates using a variety of inherent talents or learning styles. *PTO trainers will need to be properly trained in the PTO program* and will need to demonstrate a thorough understanding of their own learning styles and the strengths and weaknesses that they bring to the learning process.

### **PBL - Problem Based Learning**

A student-centered teaching model that incorporates problem-solving as the method for student learning. Traditionally, learning has involved a teacher or instructor delivering information as content to the learner. Content-based teaching is an ineffective way to inculcate new officers into the COPPS philosophy. PBL begins with presentation of a *real life* problem that the student must attempt to solve. The student follows a process of self-discovery whereby he or she lists ideas about resolving the problem, lists known facts, decides what information he or she needs to learn and develops action plans to solve the problem. The process-based learning in PBL provides a much more effective learning experience for new trainees.

### **Phase of PTO Training**

Not all policing requires a problem-solving approach. For this reason, the program divides policing tasks into four phases of training. In the PTO program they are: 1) non-emergency incident response, 2) emergency incident response, 3) patrol activities, and 4) criminal investigation.

### **Problem-Based Learning Exercises (PBLE)**

Ill-structured problems, called *problem-based learning exercises* in this model, are the foundation upon which PBL rests. The characteristics of community-learning problems are as follows:

- They are not easily solved
- The learner lacks essential information that must be obtained to solve the problem
- The learner must consider a variety of facts and issues
- The learning occurs in the context of the problem-solving
- Learning that occurs has a “real life” context
- The learner follows a process that he or she can apply to future problems

### **Problem-Solving Skills in Policing**

There are a number of skills officers use to resolve community problems in problem-oriented policing. The most common method, the S.A.R.A. model, is an analytical approach for stopping or preventing crime, disorder, and fear. S.A.R.A. stands for scanning, analyzing, responding to, and assessing problems. S.A.R.A. is an integral part of the PTO model within the learning matrix under “problem-solving skills.” It is also inculcated as a critical thinking and analysis-driven approach in the way that trainees must continually use PBL to address everyday problems.